

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 1 as follows.

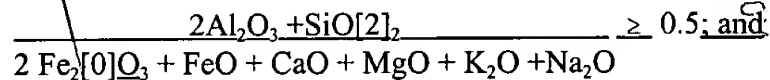
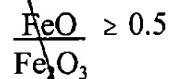
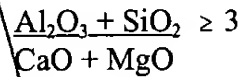
1. (Amended) A method for producing basalt fibers, comprising the steps of:

preheating basalt;

[charging] introducing the preheated basalt into a melting furnace;

heating the basalt in said furnace to form a glass mass;

stabilizing the glass mass volume in a stabilizing section of the melting furnace until it reaches a fiber manufacturing temperature[;], and then, introducing the [stabilized] glass mass into a feeder[; further] and stabilizing constituents of the glass mass in the feeder to obtain a glass mass having the composition



forming fibers by pulling the [further stabilized] glass mass from spinnerets which receive glass from the feeder.

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19. (amended) An apparatus for the practice of producing basalt fibers of claim

1, comprising of:

means for preheating basalt;

means for [charging] introducing the preheated basalt into a melting furnace;

means for heating the basalt in said furnace to form a glass mass;

means for stabilizing glass mass volume in a stabilizing section of the melting furnace

until it reaches a fiber manufacturing temperature;

feeder means;

means for introducing the stabilized glass mass into said feeder means;

means for [further] stabilizing constituents of the glass mass in said feeder

means to obtain a glass

mass having the composition

$$\frac{Al_2O_3 + SiO_2}{CaO + MgO} \geq 3$$

$$\frac{FeO}{Fe_2O_3} \geq 0.5$$

$$\frac{2Al_2O_3 + SiO_2}{2Fe_2O_3 + FeO + CaO + MgO + K_2O + Na_2O} > 0.5$$

means for forming fibers by pulling the further stabilized glass mass from

spinneret means which receive glass from the said feeder means.

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